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ABSTRACT

Three New York City public school projects funded by the New York State Education Department's Bureau of Bilingual Education had the common goal of improving the quality of instruction in schools that the state's Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) had designated as needing special assistance for raising low student performance levels. The Language Development Support Systems (LDSS) provided instruction in computer literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) to third through sixth grade unentitled language minority students at one Bronx and one Manhattan public school, and in-service training to teachers who served pupils in these schools. This project was delayed by theft of equipment. The project did not meet the student achievement objective, and met only one staff development objective. The Intensive Second Language Development for CAR Schools provided citywide workshops for ESL coordinators, special education coordinators, and curriculum/instructional personnel at CAR schools and, by request, workshops for classroom teachers. This project was fully implemented and met its staff development objective. The Curriculum Development Project used the services of a linguist to update and revise previously-written curriculum guides. This project could not be fully assessed. Recommendations for improvement include provision of adequate storage and work space and additional security measures for the LDSS program. (MSE)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

STATE INCENTIVE GRANTS

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS
INTENSIVE SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
FOR CAR SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1987-1988

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EVALUATION SECTION
John E. Schoener, Chief Administrator
June 1989

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

STATE INCENTIVE GRANTS

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS
INTENSIVE SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
FOR CAR SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1987-1988

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LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS; INTENSIVE SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR CAR SCHOOLS; AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT*

1987-88

SUMMARY

- The Language Development Support Systems (L.D.S.S.) program experienced a delay in implementation due to stolen equipment; the Intensive Language Development for CAR Schools Program was fully implemented; the Curriculum Development Project revised the scope of its activities.

- L.D.S.S. did not meet its student achievement objective, and it met one of its three staff development objectives. The Intensive Language Development for CAR Schools program met its staff development objective. The Curriculum Development Project did not revise its objective to reflect its new focus; therefore, this objective could not be fully assessed.

In 1987-88, the New York State Education Department's Bureau of Bilingual Education, through its Incentive Grant Program, provided funds for the second year to the New York City Board of Education's Office of Bilingual Education (O.B.E.) for three projects. The common goal of these projects was to improve the quality of instruction in schools that the state's Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) had designated as needing special assistance to raise low student-performance levels. Each project had its own budget and staff and was administered by a project director responsible to a Deputy Director of O.B.E.

Language Development Support Systems (L.D.S.S.) provided instruction in computer literacy and E.S.L. to third through sixth grade unentitled** language-minority students at one Bronx and one Manhattan public school and in-service training to

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*This summary is based on the final evaluation of the "Language Development for CAR Schools Curriculum Development Project 1987-88" prepared by the OREA Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit.

**Students whose native language is not English and whose scores on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) range from the twenty-first to the fortieth percentile. Although such students are not entitled to bilingual services under the terms of the Aspira consent decree and the Lau vs. Nichols U.S. Supreme Court decision, they are less proficient in English than their monolingual English-speaking peers.

teachers who served pupils in these two schools. L.D.S.S.'s on-site staff consisted of two master teachers and one paraprofessional. Several experts in E.S.L. and in the use of computers for language teaching also provided in-service training.

Because the formal promotional criteria to assess student achievement were applicable only to students in fourth grade, it was not possible to evaluate this objective for students in any other grade. The proportion of students meeting the promotional criteria did not reach 75 percent; therefore, the program did not meet this objective. The project achieved one of its three staff development objectives: the attendance rate at project-sponsored workshops met the proposed criterion, and the evaluation forms to determine the workshops' effectiveness indicated a high degree of satisfaction. The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) could not assess the remaining two objectives because of a lack of data.

Intensive Second Language Development for CAR Schools provided citywide workshops for E.S.L. coordinators, special education coordinators, and curriculum/instructional personnel at CAR schools, and, by request, workshops for classroom teachers. Additional workshops were held at school district headquarters and at individual schools. The staff for this project consisted of two full-time teacher trainers and the project director.

The Curriculum Development Project used the services of a per-session linguist to update and revise previously written curriculum guides.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations for the L.D.S.S. project:

- If L.D.S.S. remains at these sites, P.S. 26 and P.S. 132 should provide adequate storage and work space.

- Institute additional security measures to safeguard project computers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New York State Education Department's Comprehensive Assessment Report (CAR) identified several New York City public schools with large populations of limited English proficient (LEP) students as being "in need of assistance" to raise the low achievement levels of their students. As a result of this finding, the State funded the three projects evaluated in this report. Each project was implemented and staffed separately and was headed by a project director who reported to a Deputy Director at the Office of Bilingual Education (O.B.E.).

The Language Development Support Systems (L.D.S.S.) program, now in its second year, had two goals: to improve the academic performance and promotion rates of 240 targeted students, and to improve the performance and abilities of teachers serving those students. Students who scored above the twentieth percentile, but less than the fortieth percentile, on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery* were eligible for the program. L.D.S.S. was staffed by two master teachers and a paraprofessional. They used a combination of project-supplied Apple computers and school hardware, a number of software programs, and a variety of other curricular materials to develop the English and native language skills of

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developoed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of nonnative speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

language-minority students at two CAR schools. In addition, L.D.S.S. staff offered after-school, in-service seminars to participating teachers in each school.

The Intensive Second Language Development for CAR Schools program performed two separate but related tasks. It provided training workshops on E.S.L. teaching techniques to E.S.L. coordinators, special education coordinators, and, whenever space was available, to classroom teachers assigned to CAR schools throughout the city. These workshops were held at several New York City colleges and universities and the presenters were widely acknowledged experts in E.S.L. Largely in response to requests received at the E.S.L. and special education coordinators' training workshops, the program also provided seminars to classroom teachers on E.S.L. teaching methods. These workshops were held at individual CAR schools and at district headquarters throughout the city. For the most part, two teacher trainers employed full-time led these seminars.

The Curriculum Development Project employed a linguistic expert on an hourly basis to help the project coordinator update and revise existing curriculum guides in Spanish.

The evaluation of the three programs spanned a variety of assessment methods. These included an examination of students'

pre- and post-test scores on the LAB and the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.)*; and an examination of workshop attendance records, training logs, and evaluation forms. The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) evaluation consultant met with each of the three project directors and the Deputy Director in charge of the overall project. She also examined program materials and products.

*The Degrees of Reading Power Test was developed by the College Board to provide information about student reading ability on the same scale used to describe the difficulty of textbooks.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

L.D.S.S. was in its second year of funding. Although the majority of students had been selected for participation during the previous spring, the program was not fully operational in September 1987 because its computer equipment had been stolen over the summer months. Activities during the first two months of the fall included purchasing new computer equipment and making secure storage arrangements. Once these tasks were completed, the program was able to get underway again in November 1987. L.D.S.S. staff reoriented teachers, set up teaching schedules, distributed a resource manual, and began providing students with language support instruction four times per week.

IMPLEMENTATION

Sites

The two schools that participated in the program were: P.S. 26 in Community School District (C.S.D.) 10 in the Bronx, and P.S. 132 in C.S.D. 6 in Manhattan. Both schools were in run-down neighborhoods undergoing revitalization. Each school was extremely overcrowded and served students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, the majority being Hispanic. L.D.S.S. was housed in less than ideal circumstances at both sites--the schools were not able to provide adequate space for instruction and storage, although the administrative personnel at each school were highly appreciative of the extra resources the project brought to the schools.

Staff

Full-time project staff included the project director, two resource specialists, one paraprofessional, and a secretary. The project director had over ten years of teaching experience. She left the program when she was promoted to a district-level position at the end of May.

One L.D.S.S. resource specialist had experience teaching in both Puerto Rico and on the mainland. The second resource specialist was educated and trained in the United States and was experienced in working in special education and gifted programs and in the use of computer-assisted instruction. She assumed the position of interim director when the project director left.

Both resource specialists worked at the central office one day per week. They used this time to develop and refine curricula and to discuss problems and plan future activities with the project director.

One school had the additional support of a paraprofessional. However, the project had to replace the person filling this position midyear, since the incumbent lacked the college credits required.

Instructional Program

Each resource specialist spent four days on-site providing instructional services to groups of eight to ten students within their classrooms. Every effort was made not to disrupt the regular classroom program--the resource specialists met weekly with classroom teachers to plan their activities. The resource

specialists encouraged teachers to use the computers in order to make the instructional use of personal computers a part of the teaching program.

Instruction consisted largely of language development in E.S.L., with a special emphasis on writing and reading skills development. The resource specialists used commercially prepared, computer-based language programs.*

Participating Students

In 1987-88, L.D.S.S. reported data for 145 students in grades three through six. Eighty students were from P.S. 132 and 65 students were from P.S. 26. (See Table 1.) Most of the participating students (74 percent) were born in the United States and were raised in Spanish-speaking households. (See Table 2.)

Staff Development Training

At each site, L.D.S.S. staff offered bimonthly after-school in-service training for the ten teachers serving program students. The participating teachers were remunerated on a per-session basis. The workshops were held at each of the host schools.

The goals of these sessions were:

- to familiarize participants with L.D.S.S., particularly with the role of the resource specialists;

* The selection of computer-based instruction and software was based on the results of an intensive search conducted by a panel of teachers and others during the summer of 1988.

TABLE 1

Distribution of L.D.S.S. Students by Grade and School

Grade	P.S. 26	P.S. 132	Total	Percent
3	24	29	53	37
4	13	17	30	21
5	16	34	50	34
6	12	0	12	8
TOTAL	65	80	145*	

*Data were missing for 95 students.

- Most participating students were in the third and fifth grades.

TABLE 2

Number and Percent of L.D.S.S. Students by Country of Birth

Country of Birth	Number	Percent
United States	106	74.1
Dominican Republic	24	16.8
Puerto Rico	8	5.6
El Salvador	2	1.4
Cuba	1	0.7
Guatemala	1	0.7
TOTAL	142*	100.0

*Data were missing for 67 students.

- Almost three-fourths of the participating students were born in the United States.

- to develop participants' knowledge of the full range of E.S.L. teaching techniques; and
- to train participants in the educational uses of the computer.

The workshops consisted of lecture/discussions and hands-on sessions in the computer lab. Instructional and administrative programs were among the topics included. Project teachers in C.S.D. 6 had three additional workshops in which they developed and discussed individual projects and further familiarized themselves with project software.

L.D.S.S. staff also extended training services to other educational personnel, for example, a citywide workshop at the Manhattan Technical Assistance Center showcased the program's software brochure developed during the summer of 1987. A similar but smaller-scaled workshop for bilingual education personnel from C.S.D. 32 took place at the Brooklyn Technical Assistance Center. The Multifunctional Resource Center at Teacher's College sponsored a one-day conference at which L.D.S.S. staff presented information about the project.

OUTCOMES

Following are the objectives for L.D.S.S. contained in the project proposal and the evaluation findings for each:

Program Students

- By the conclusion of the project in June 1988, 75 percent of the participating students will meet promotional criteria as a result of participating in the program as measured by the citywide standardized reading test entitled Degrees of Reading Power and the LAB score.

Formal promotional criteria were applicable to students in fourth and seventh grades; for these students to be promoted they had to score at or above the thirty-second percentile on the D.R.P. Since the data available were for students in grades three through six, it was only possible to evaluate this objective for program fourth-graders. Of the 25 fourth graders for whom posttest data were available, 11 (44 percent) met the promotion criterion. L.D.S.S. did not achieve the proposed objective.

Additional analyses assessed students' achievement in English reading. Analysts computed a correlated *t*-test on the D.R.P. to determine whether the difference between mean pre- and posttest scores was significantly greater than would be expected from chance variation alone.

Students in grade five who took both the pre- and posttest of the D.R.P. showed a statistically significant ($p < .05$) mean N.C.E. gain of 13.6.* (See Table 3.) Pre- and posttest data were not available for students in grade three. Students in grades four and six registered declines in their N.C.E. scores. These analyses suggest that, overall, fifth graders increased

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*Raw scores were converted to Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) scores, which are normalized standard scores. They have the advantage of forming an equal interval scale so that scores and gains can be averaged. For the norming population, N.C.E.s have a mean of 50, a standard deviation of approximately 20, and a range from 1 to 99. Thus, scores can be compared to the norming population.

TABLE 3

Pretest/Posttest N.C.E. Differences
on the Degrees of Reading Power Test, by Grade

Grade	Number of Students	Pretest		Posttest		Difference		Proportion of Students Making Gains
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
4	25	36.5	7.9	35.8	16.0	-0.7	14.7	44 percent
5	45	41.9	8.7	55.6	10.8	13.7*	11.3	89 percent
6	11	51.1	9.1	41.0	11.5	-10.1	9.8	9 percent

*$p < .05$

- Students in fifth grade were the only ones who made statistically significant gains.

their reading achievement. L.D.S.S. did not meet the student achievement objective.

Project Teachers

- By the conclusion of the project, the target teachers will demonstrate awareness and knowledge of successful E.S.L. practices and methodologies as a result of participating in staff development training sessions as measured by formal observations and a five-point training scale inventory, tabulating and ascertaining percentage change.

According to the project director, the attendance rate was usually 100 percent. Workshop evaluation forms indicated, with few exceptions, that participants rated the workshops very positively on the following characteristics: clarity, organization, knowledge, scope, and usefulness of the presentations. Taken together, the results of the attendance data and satisfaction ratings indicated that the project met the above objective.

- By the conclusion of this project 80 percent of teachers will be familiar with materials and methodology of native language instruction as measured by a five-point training scale inventory, tabulating and ascertaining percentage change.

The project director indicated that she did not use the five-point training scale as proposed, but substituted another survey instead. Since the project did not use the instrument designated in the objective and therefore did not furnish the data as proposed, OREA could not determine whether the project had met its objective.

- By the conclusion of the project, on June 30, 1988, the teachers and paraprofessionals working with the target

student population will more effectively carry out job-related responsibilities as a result of the six in-service workshops conducted with a 90 percent attendance rate as measured by the ratio of attendance to registrants and staff evaluation forms.

Because of the lack of attendance data, OREA could not completely evaluate this objective. However, the results of workshop evaluation revealed that the participants were extremely pleased with the program. The evaluation forms allowed the teachers to rate the clarity, effectiveness, organization, relevance, and overall usefulness of the presentations on a four-point Likert scale (1=poor, 4=excellent). The overall mean rating for the workshops was 3.8 (s.d.=0.36), close to the maximum possible of four.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In its second year of operation, L.D.S.S. confronted several major problems: stolen computer equipment, inadequate space for storage and materials preparation, lack of fiscal resources in host school budgets to repair broken equipment, limited time available for instruction, and the departure of the project director and paraprofessional. Nevertheless, L.D.S.S. was able to overcome these obstacles and function effectively.

One change from last year was that the resource specialists provided instruction to groups of eight to ten students in their classrooms rather than working with students on a pull-out basis, as they had done last year.

The host schools appeared to value the contribution of the project to their staff and instructional resources. The

participating teachers were pleased with the training offered by the project.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- If L.D.S.S. remains at those sites, P.S. 26 and P.S. 132 should provide adequate storage and work space.
- Institute additional security measures to safeguard project computers.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS: INTENSIVE SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

In its second year of operation, this project continued to provide teachers and other personnel with intensive workshops related to teaching E.S.L. and language arts. During June 1988, project staff surveyed teachers and coordinators to assess their interests and needs and to plan project activities accordingly.

IMPLEMENTATION

Staff

The project staff included a project director, two resource specialists, and a full-time secretary.

The project director had a master's degree; had been employed by the Board of Education since 1975; and had 13 years experience as a classroom teacher, bilingual education/E.S.L. teacher, project coordinator, and teacher trainer.

One of the resource specialists had taught for 10 years and had experience in early childhood education and a master's degree in English. The second resource specialist position was filled midyear by a full-time staff person who had prior experience as a curriculum writer and teacher trainer. She quickly integrated into the project's activities.

Staff Development

Based on the interests and needs of teachers and coordinators as shown by the project survey, the project provided a wide variety of activities. It offered a seven-part workshop series held over the course of the school year in a variety of

off-school sites. Over 750 persons attended these citywide sessions. In addition, over 3,000 professionals participated in 106 on-site workshops offered at schools and district offices. Finally, the project and another unit of the O.B.E. cosponsored two additional conferences for special education personnel on the use of E.S.L. techniques for special education LEP students. Approximately 200 persons attended these two workshops.

The seven citywide workshops were sponsored jointly by the E.S.L. Unit of the Division of High Schools and major publishers who provided funds to hire guest presenters. The guest presenters were prominent authors, scholars, and practitioners in the areas of E.S.L. and language learning. According to project personnel, these meetings were so popular that participants had to make reservations. Attendance was usually limited to coordinators, although a small number of classroom teachers were permitted to attend. If there was sufficient interest, the two resource specialists conducted on-site workshops on the same topics, often tailored to the specific needs of this site. Workshop topics included, but were not limited to, the following: E.S.L. Through Culture; Implementing an E.S.L. Program for LEP Students; E.S.L. Materials and Resources; Total Physical Response in the E.S.L. Classroom; Integrating E.S.L. and Content Area Instruction in Grades Six Through Eight; and Working with a Paraprofessional to Teach E.S.L. In addition, the project disseminated ten major publications related to teaching LEP students.

In order to improve their own skills and inform colleagues of the value of the E.S.L. approach, the project director and the two resource specialists participated in a number of staff development activities. For example, the project director attended a series of training sessions for language arts coordinators.

OUTCOMES

The following is the evaluation objective for the Intensive Second Language Development for CAR Schools program and OREA's findings:

- By the conclusion of the project on June 30, 1988, the teachers and paraprofessionals working with the target population will more effectively carry out job-related responsibilities as a result of the six in-service workshops conducted with a 90 percent attendance rate as measured by the attendance rate and staff evaluation.

According to the project director, the overall response to the workshops was almost uniformly positive. In fact, she stated that she had so many applicants interested in attending the citywide workshop series that an R.S.V.P. requirement was appended to each announcement. Letters from workshop attendees indicated both the general level of satisfaction with workshop content and the interest across job levels. Comments included the following: "...staff were very supportive and helpful..."; "Due to your efforts our district has been able to provide quality training for its teachers..."; "Many thanks for your exciting and informative presentation."; "workshops were useful

and enjoyable"; and "...several teachers already implementing the techniques."

The project met its objective.

CONCLUSIONS

In its second year of operation, the Intensive Second Language Development for CAR Schools program continued to serve a wide spectrum of educational personnel, using available resources--both in-house staff and outside presenters--in an efficient and cost-effective manner. During the year under review the program staff served approximately 4,000 persons.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The project's original objective was to field test three previously developed curriculum guides. However, O.B.E. changed this goal to one of revising existing but outdated materials. The project hired a linguist on a per-session basis to review, update, and rewrite several Spanish-language curricula. The project was responsible for the curricula's contents and for formatting the revised material, and the linguist was responsible for grammar and syntax. At the time of the evaluation, the project director indicated that the revised curriculum guides were nearly ready for final formatting and printing.

STAFF

The project director had a doctorate. She had written extensively both as a primary author and as a contributor in a variety of curriculum endeavors. Her collaborator had a doctorate and was professor of languages in a university.